

Rehabilitation of the Arlington Memorial Bridge

George Washington Memorial Parkway
Washington, DC and Virginia

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Public Scoping Newsletter

Arlington Memorial Bridge Rehabilitation Environmental Assessment

The National Park Service (NPS), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration, is proposing to rehabilitate Arlington Memorial Bridge. The historic bridge is an important element of the George Washington Memorial Parkway and of the transportation network of the Washington, D.C. area. In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and other laws, regulations and policies, the NPS is beginning work on an Environmental Assessment (EA), which will evaluate potential impacts of rehabilitation on the natural, cultural and structural environment.

History and Significance

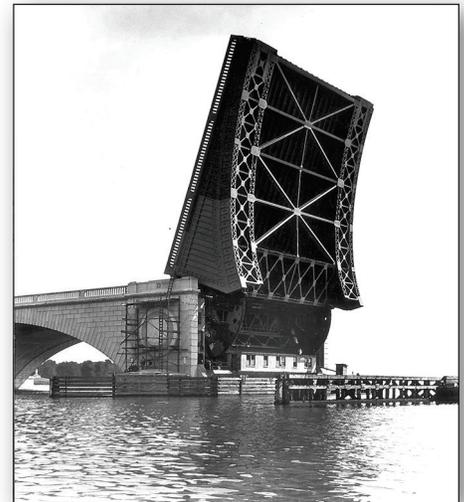
Completed in 1932, the Arlington Memorial Bridge spans the Potomac River and connects the Lincoln Memorial and Arlington National Cemetery. Its alignment was intended to physically and symbolically link the North and South on the axis between the two landmarks.

The architectural firm McKim, Mead, and White designed the bridge during the 1920s to look like other memorials in Washington, D.C., and to preserve views to the Lincoln Memorial from the Virginia shore of the Potomac River. It was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1980 for its architectural characteristics and innovative engineering achievements. At one time, the bascule span was the longest (216 feet), heaviest (3,000 tons), and fastest (one minute) draw span of its kind in the world.

Today, it is used for many events including parades and marathons, and is a dramatic and somber approach to Arlington Cemetery for funeral processions. Ferries, water taxis, dinner cruises, boats and rowers routinely pass under the bridge.

Transportation Link

In addition to its significance as a memorial, the bridge is a vital link in the regional transportation network. Not only does it provide access across the Potomac River



Draw span in open position

for more than 54,000 vehicles each day, it also provides connections to several heavily traveled roadways by way of the George Washington Memorial Parkway. On its wide sidewalks, the bridge provides crossing for pedestrians and bicyclists and access to the Mount Vernon Trail.



Western view towards Arlington National Cemetery

Purpose and Need

Arlington Memorial Bridge is more than 80 years old and has never undergone a major rehabilitation. Several temporary repairs have kept it operational to meet the needs of the traveling public. However, like many other older highway bridges across the nation, this bridge needs comprehensive repair to ensure service for decades to come.

The Federal Highway Administration inspects the bridge according to industry standards. These detailed structural inspections and studies have identified corroded steel and deteriorated concrete. The most critical elements to repair are the concrete arch approach spans and the steel bascule (drawbridge) span. While the bridge is still considered safe for travel, the superstructure is deteriorating at an accelerated pace, which may require

weight restrictions or closure if it is not rehabilitated in the near future.

The proposed project is to restore the structural integrity of Arlington Memorial Bridge while protecting and preserving, to the extent feasible, its memorial character and design elements.

Project Considerations

There are a number of natural and cultural resources as well as economic and transportation-related impacts that will be affected by the proposed rehabilitation. The following are just a few of the identified concerns that will be evaluated in the EA.

Historic Structures and Cultural Landscapes

The bridge is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and is an important element of the area's cultural landscape.

Traffic and Transportation

Rehabilitation would require temporary delays and closures that could increase traffic congestion, interrupt access for pedestrian and bicycle commuters and affect access to local businesses.

Visitor Use and Experience

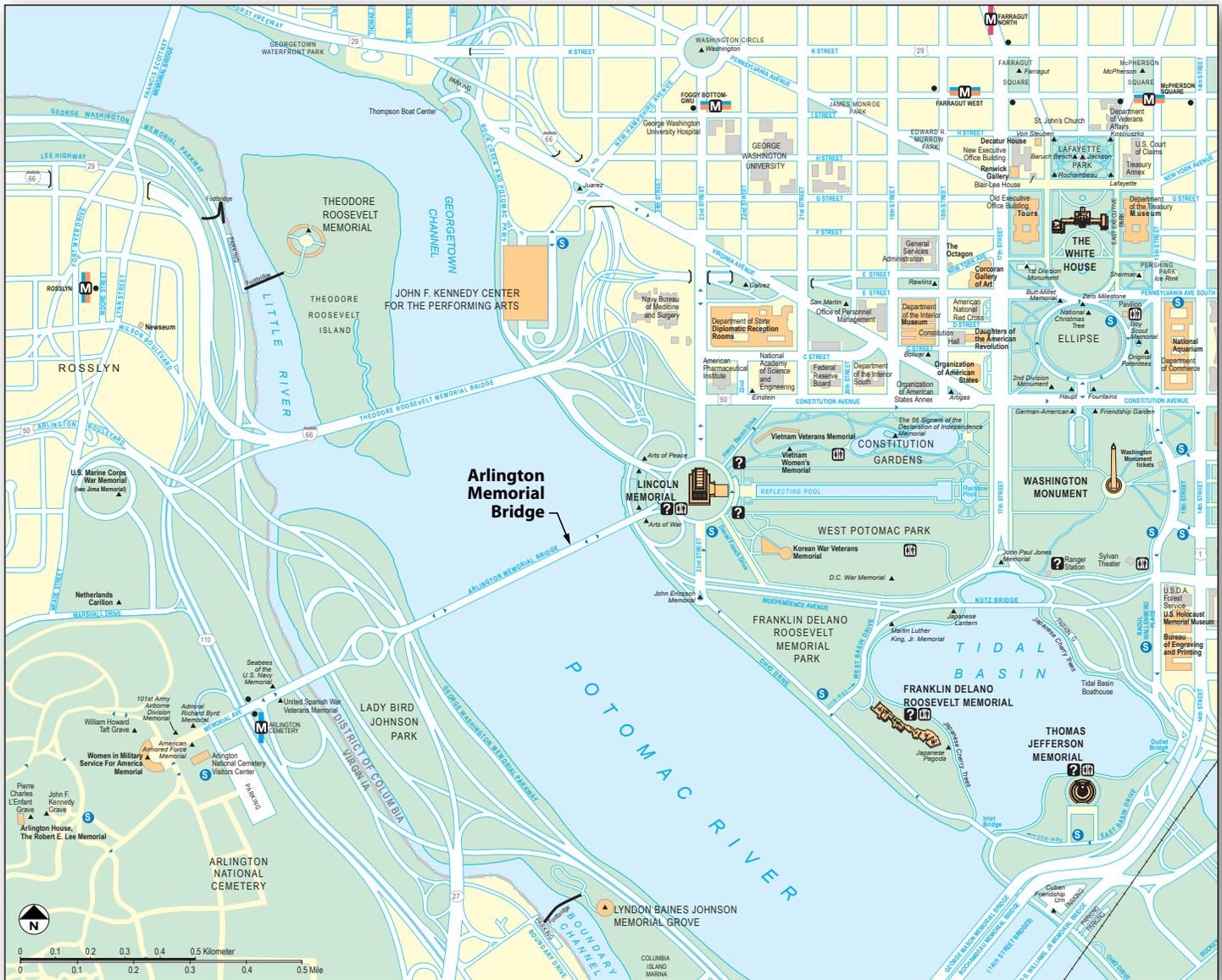
Visitation and recreational use may be interrupted or limited during construction including access between the National Mall and Arlington National Cemetery and access to and from the Mount Vernon Trail.

Wildlife

Aquatic wildlife including Atlantic sturgeon, an endangered species, could be affected.

Water Quality

Construction may disturb river bottom sediments and possibly harm water quality in the Potomac River temporarily.



NEPA and Section 106 Process

NEPA provides a broad national framework for protecting the environment and requires all federal agencies to consider the potential environmental impacts of any proposed project. In compliance with NEPA and NPS Director's Order #12, the NPS will study project impacts and consider feedback from the public before deciding how to proceed. The NPS will develop a range of alternatives for rehabilitation and repair of Arlington Memorial Bridge. The input provided at agency and public scoping meetings is used to help develop these alternatives, which will be analyzed in accordance with NEPA and provided to the public for additional input and comment.



Eastern view towards the National Mall



Western view from the Lincoln Memorial



Western view towards Arlington National Cemetery

Public Scoping Meetings

Public involvement is a very important part of the process. The NPS will host two public scoping meetings, one in Washington, D.C., and one in Virginia. The scoping meetings will be an open house format. Members of the public may stop by any time during the hours listed to see displays on the proposed project and talk to project team members. The dates, locations and times for each public scoping meeting are as follows:

April 23, 2013

2:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

The Heritage Center of the United States Navy Memorial
701 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, DC 20004

(closest Metrorail station is Archives-Navy Memorial-Penn Quarter)

April 25, 2013

6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Little Theater
Washington Lee High School
1301 North Stafford Street
Arlington, VA 22201

(closest Metrorail station is Ballston-MU)

If circumstances require the NPS to reschedule one or both of these meetings, every effort will be made to notify the public of changes to the meeting schedule. For further information please contact the George Washington Memorial Parkway Headquarters at 703-289-2500.



Arts of War statue

Environmental Assessment Process Overview

Project milestones include:

Public and Agency Scoping	March 2013 – April 2013
Public Scoping Meetings	April 23 and 25, 2013
Analysis of Public Scoping Comments	Spring 2013
Alternatives Development	Spring 2013
Public Meetings to Introduce Alternatives	Summer 2013
Environmental Analysis/Preparation of EA	Summer/Fall 2013
EA released to Public/Agencies	Winter 2014
Analysis of Public/Agency Comments	Spring 2014
Issuance of Finding of No Significant Impact (if appropriate)	Spring 2014

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Public Scoping Period

The superintendent of the George Washington Memorial Parkway has announced a 45-day public scoping period to solicit public comments on the proposal to rehabilitate the Arlington Memorial Bridge. During this scoping period, the public is invited to identify any additional alternatives, issues or concerns they might have with the proposed project so the NPS can appropriately consider them in the EA.

Only written comments are accepted. The NPS preferred method for receiving comments from members of the public is electronically through the Planning, Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) website at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/gwmp>. Written comments may be mailed to: Superintendent, George Washington Memorial Parkway, c/o Turkey Run Park, McLean, VA 22101. Mailed comments must be postmarked by May 24, 2013, to receive consideration.

Please be aware that your comment including personal identifying information, such as an address, phone number and email, may be made publicly available at any time and as required by the Freedom of Information Act. Although you can request in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, the NPS cannot guarantee that it will be able to do so.

Once the EA is developed, it will be made available for public review for at least 30 days. If you wish to be added to the park's mailing list for this or other announcements, please be sure to indicate that in your comment.